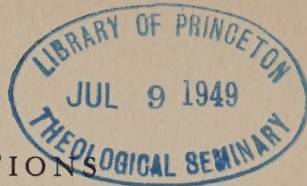


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THE CRAVING FOR SUPERIORITY



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THE CRAVING FOR SUPERIORITY

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PREFACE

THIS little book represents an approach to a scientific doctrine of the craving for superiority expressing a synthesis of two points of view, one psychological* and the other psychopathological† with their respective traditions and aims. We hope that it may act as a stimulus, not only for a better understanding of an important group of mental phenomena, but also for a more comprehensive and precise description of these phenomena, and for sounder practical systems which take them into account. Especially should it operate as a corrective in both fields for hasty and ill-considered generalizations.

We do not intend to suggest a panacea for the amelioration of all abnormal personalities and we wish to avoid an oversimplification of the mental and bodily conditions of the psychopath. We are of the opinion, however, that the craving for superiority and the feeling of superiority are important and almost universal factors in human psychology and are worth studying as such. Furthermore, we believe that the coöperative approach which is represented in this study is one method among others which may help in the difficult task of understanding human nature.

The total picture of human behavior is very complicated and very susceptible to the fallacy of oversimplification. In the close interdependence of the several parts

* Raymond Dodge, *Conditions and Consequences of Human Variability* (Yale University Press, 1931).

† Eugen Kahn, *Psychopathic Personalities* (Yale University Press, 1931).

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it is easy to exaggerate the importance of any given factor. While it is false to assert that any part determines the whole, in a certain sense it is always true that without any specific part the total structure would be different. Moreover, occasionally a part may have a very far-reaching influence. Under certain conditions, any factor in the make-up of the individual may be disproportionately accentuated within the whole, both in the total personality structure and in regard to any given reaction. For example, in the state of hunger the impulse for self-preservation commonly plays a much more outstanding rôle than intelligence; conversely, the satisfaction of hunger following the ingestion of food may change the mood, and with it the whole attitude of the personality. Such, however, are the limitations of human attention and insight that every picture can be seen clearly only part by part, or factor by factor. It has been our aim to see consistently the factor which we are trying to study in relation to the whole, that is the craving for superiority in relation to the total personality.

It seems to us that the craving for superiority or for a feeling of superiority is practically universal in human beings, both normal and abnormal, but that it differs widely in various individuals both in degree of emphasis and in the extent to which it modifies behavior. Its satisfactions may appear in a great variety of forms, from distinguished achievement in politics, finance, science, engineering, and administration to delusions of grandeur; from exhibitionism of various orders to social reform; from religious mysticism to a withdrawal into a world of fantasy; from crime to social service.

PREFACE

Probably no person or community may be entirely free from the craving for superiority and since it plays an important rôle in the development of personalities, social adjustments, and cultures, the student of human nature should make a serious effort to understand and evaluate it as a psychobiological process. It may be a factor in the adjustment of plants and the lower animals as well as of human beings; but in this book our immediate interest is restricted to a consideration of man.

R. D.

E. K.

*New Haven, Connecticut,
June, 1931.*

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THE RELATIVITY OF SUPERIORITY AND INFERIORITY

SUPERIORITY and inferiority mean many things to many men. They belong to the group of too familiar concepts whose full significance and implications appear only after thoughtful analysis. Just now popular psychology rather overworks the inferiority complex as a weapon both of attack and defense. In this book we shall deal with superiority and inferiority as intimately related with each other under the following aspects:

1. Genuine superiority and genuine inferiority as matters of fact.
2. A feeling of superiority and a feeling of inferiority which may or may not correspond to fact.
3. A craving for genuine or matter-of-fact superiority and a craving for inferiority.
4. A craving for the feeling of superiority and a craving for the feeling of inferiority.

Matter-of-fact Superiority and Inferiority

CERTAIN human traits as height, length of arm, and intelligence are subject to measurement. If a large number of such measurements are gathered together and grouped statistically their distribu-

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tion within the group follows the law of probability; half of them lie below the median, half above. They are most numerous near the middle. It is obvious that in measuring height each individual is either superior or inferior as compared with the others. We may assume that the same is true of those human traits which we are not yet able to measure. Every such distribution of traits includes matter-of-fact superiority as well as matter-of-fact inferiority. The chances of an individual's being superior in all human traits are infinitesimal, and the same holds true of his being inferior. The general population is made up of people who are statistically superior in some traits and inferior in others. Since no two personalities are identical the combination of the many traits characterizing a human personality, and the various degrees of superiority and inferiority of those traits show great diversity. The number of variations is equal to the number of individuals.

Superiority and inferiority are not limited to human differences. Both conceptions are applicable to inorganic objects and to the relations between men and animals. Stone is harder than clay; that is matter-of-fact superiority. Men are more intelligent, in certain ways, than apes; that is also matter-of-fact superiority. What is true of

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matter-of-fact superiority, is true of matter-of-fact inferiority. Clay is inferior to stone in respect to hardness; apes are, under certain circumstances, inferior to men in regard to intelligence. Some men are inferior to others in regard to intelligence; some, in regard to bodily development or other properties.

Feeling of Superiority and Inferiority

IN the feeling of superiority and inferiority the relationships are more complex. Only one at the very bottom of the distribution of a trait (such as height or weight, wisdom or the capacity to work) is superior to nobody. Conversely, only one at the very top is inferior to none. The great majority of mankind is to be found between these two extremes. Each one is both superior and inferior at the same time—superior to those below him and inferior to those above him. Statistics leave us no alternative. Judgments that any individual is as a matter of fact superior or inferior are subjective accidents of the point of view. They are commonly matters of temperament or mood. This holds true of all human traits and of all personalities. Popular judgments of superiority and inferiority depend not only on statistical distribution of

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trait measurements, but also on feeling. As James pointed out, the second-best prize fighter may feel as humiliated about his position in the pugilistic world as the common man. Even more so as the latter has less pretensions. The feeling of superiority or inferiority is consequently dependent on the personal system of values.

We are thoroughly aware of the variations in each individual's system of values and its modifications according to changes in his psychophysical condition (fatigue, sorrow, euphoria, success, age, etc.). There is one personality in the presence of which each of us always feels his inferiority, that is the "bogey" of the person he would like to be. Similarly there is one in the presence of which he regularly feels his superiority, that is the personality he has just outgrown. The feeling of superiority and inferiority may be considered as an accident of the point of view, not only in the matter of the distribution of traits, but also of the development of the individual.

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POPULAR judgments of superiority and inferiority commonly depend on the position of the individual in the distribution of those traits that for

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some reason or other have special value in the organization of the society that judges them. Kings, cannibal chiefs, and racketeers are regarded as superior only in certain population groups. They may be regarded as inferior in other groups.

Personal judgments of the matter-of-fact superiority and inferiority of an individual are biased by the social emphasis as well as by the personal emphasis that arises from the system of values which is characteristic of each personality; from pet vocational or avocational activities and from the possibility of satisfying the craving for superiority. Whether prize fighters, chess players, or scientists are regarded as superior depends on personal bias. Most men want to excel in a real way in one direction or another, in their professions or in their avocations.

This craving for matter-of-fact superiority is based on the facts of distribution and combination of traits. It involves a correlation between the matter-of-fact superiority of an individual and his craving for superiority: the individual is aware of his genuine superiority and enjoys the feeling of superiority in developing it as far as possible according to his equipment and to the need or demand of the community.

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Craving for the Feeling of Superiority

THERE are individuals who are not able to achieve sufficient social distinction in the direction of their matter-of-fact superiority because it is relatively low. In such a case the craving for superiority may be supplemented by a craving for a feeling of superiority which can only be satisfied by assumed or pretentious superiority, that is, by pseudosuperiority. For example, very moderately endowed persons put on airs and pose as geniuses, a mediocre painter may found a new school of art, a bounder may ape the manners of the aristocracy, a servant may become insolent.

The genuine superiority never fails to have a certain obviousness which tends to evoke a feeling of superiority, and may satisfy to a certain degree the craving for superiority. The feeling of pseudosuperiority as well as the craving for the feeling of superiority will always be more or less subjective, representing the individual's egotistic interest. There will frequently be found a rather outspoken feeling of inferiority and a considerable matter-of-fact inferiority at the root of this pseudosuperiority. But it should not be forgotten that there exists an entirely legitimate feeling of superiority and that from it, to the feeling of pseudosuperiority, a fluid transition may be traced.

NATURAL HISTORY OF VALUES

DEALING with superiority and inferiority we are continually confronted with the conception of value. Saying that stone is harder than clay means not only that stone is superior to clay in respect to hardness but means also that from our human standpoint stone has—in respect to hardness—a higher value than clay.

A system of values can only be consciously developed and applied by an organism that experiences and strives. It may therefore be expedient to outline a sort of phylogenesis or evolutionary history of the conception of value on the basis of the matter-of-fact superiority and inferiority.

What do we human beings mean when we speak of values? We know that man creates values and craves for values, and we include in the conception of value the conception of purpose. We cannot conceive of a system of purposes or values outside of a personality. It is one of the most striking characteristics of a person that he has purposes and values and that he is able to appraise his environment; in other words, the ego evaluates itself as well as the non-ego. Obviously man is able to strive toward goals, to think and act according to purpose, that is, to strive for and arrive at goals

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according to his capacity, desire, and will. Each man's goals have value for him, they have some significance in his way of life, and perhaps also for his community. Such evaluation is intimately connected with the person's—the ego's—feeling of superiority and inferiority.

We do not know how far stone and clay may experience their superiority and inferiority, but we may assume that there is a certain consciousness of superiority and inferiority among animals; for example, it seems quite probable that a lion has in some manner the experience, or the feeling, of his superiority over zebras he is going to kill and devour. Conversely, the trembling zebras probably experience their inferiority when they become aware of the lion's approach. The root of this feeling of superiority and inferiority, in lion and zebra, lies in the fact that the lion has greater bodily strength (superiority) than the zebra. We do not venture to say that lion and zebra are conscious of the difference of value which is involved in their various physical equipment. But we may assume that there is implied—using our human manner of thinking—some sort of value or system of values even in animals. Of course we are not dealing here with the values that various animals may represent for human be-

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ings in regard to hunting, to food, to domestication, etc., but rather with the values related to the animals' own striving. If that is justifiable we may not confine values and value systems to men and mammals; we have rather to look for a broader biological foundation.

Let us visualize a monocyte at the very lowest stage of phylogenesis we can imagine. The life, the vitality, of this monocyte would represent impulse life in its primordial condition, that is, life at the impulse level. It would be only the drive to live—the primordial impulse life—which would differentiate this monocyte from inorganic matter. Such a monocyte would be inferior to all more complex plants and animals. However, it would have one definite purpose and value: to maintain its little share of life. In other words: life, purpose, and value would be identical in the undifferentiated monocyte at the impulse level. The only purpose of our monocyte would be to live its life and then go to pieces, without any defense, scarcely different from inorganic matter. We may mention here that life—vitality—never ceases to be a value in any living organism.

Such a pure impulse-being as our hypothetical monocyte may be very much of an abstraction. Nevertheless, it is illuminating to realize that in

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such a being there would be only the most rudimentary differentiation of values; no developed system of values can be postulated.

A definite step toward a system of purposes and of values appears with the development of instinct. By instinct we mean a certain selective attitude toward the environment. This selective attitude consists in centripetal adjustment, seeking favorable surroundings and avoiding unfavorable ones; which is nothing else than a primitive form of evaluation of the ego and the non-ego. Life alone would no longer be the only purpose and value. In some so-called higher beings life as such may lose its intrinsic purpose and value. At least it may cease to be always first and most important. A man may sacrifice his life for what he takes to be a more significant goal.

If we regard impulse or impulse life as the representative of primordial vitality, we must seek the root of the capacity for adjustment in instinct, the elementary form of which seems to be a mere tropism.

The more complicated organisms are, the more independent they apparently become of the drive of mere "general vitality." However, this independence is only relative, since the individual existence of all organisms, including man, is con-

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fined to the short span of time between birth and death; within this time, no individual can get rid of the universal laws which govern life as a whole, in each monocyte as well as in the most complicated multicellular being. From this point of view, we can see in all psychical and physical reactions more or less elaborate tools for achieving purposes within the frame of a system to which we, in our human sophistication, give the name of a system of values. Obviously, these tools cannot be developed and cannot be used outside of an organism; but they may determine in a unique way the superiority and feeling of superiority of the organism or individual possessing them.

ORGANIC AND PURPOSIVE ADJUSTMENTS

EVERY act of an organism may be regarded as a phase of mutual adjustment between the organism and the environment that affects it, tending toward a dynamic equilibrium. Sometimes the individual adjusts the environment to himself. This may be called a centrifugal act, as when a farmer plants seed in hope of a harvest or makes a fire to keep warm. Sometimes the individual adjusts himself to the environment. This may be called a centripetal act as when he migrates to a place where the grain grows wild or when he follows the sun to a warmer climate.

Adjustments may also differ from each other intrinsically according to their completeness and extrinsically according to their worth on some personal or social scale of values. Both the value and the completeness of an adjustment may be estimated either subjectively from the standpoint of the individual or objectively from that of an observer.

When the scale of values is forced on the individual by factors of the environment, either social or any other, the individual reacts under constraint. This tends to evoke a feeling of inferiority.

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When the scale of values is subjective (whatever its original source) and the individual reacts centrifugally to modify his environment he may be said to act in relative freedom. He dominates the environment. Every centrifugal act consequently tends to evoke a feeling of superiority. When circumstances prove too strong for the individual the feeling of inferiority tends to be reinstated. Consciousness of being dominated places the individual in a position of inferiority, while consciousness of domination places the individual in a position of superiority. Primitive man sharply distinguished between objects to be placated and objects to be dominated. To some degree every environment, as well as every total reaction and deliberative experience, presents a similar division or dichotomy. The individual's reaction to such a situation may be called *ambitendent*. In deliberation, *ambitendence* appears as doubt. In doubt we consider an idea or a situation from two sides: one side involves superiority (i.e., I hope to solve this problem), the other, inferiority (i.e., I fear I shall never be able to solve it).

In psychopathology we often find manifestations of obsession, one type of which is abnormal doubt—*Zweifelsucht*. In this psychopathic manifestation the person finds it difficult to make a de-

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cision on any question, even on the simplest needs of daily life; here the interplay of the *craving* for superiority and of the *feeling* of inferiority is striking.

There is probably no stimulus that may not arouse the ambivalent and interrelated feelings of superiority and inferiority. Games, business, love, and reputation represent common forms. Natural events like storms, extreme heights, waterfalls, artifacts of civilization like a great picture, a thundering locomotive, an ocean-going liner, often evoke pronounced feelings of helplessness and inferiority. Conversely, when one breasts the storm, possesses a fine work of art, crosses the country on a limited train, or takes passage on a huge steamship, he may experience a certain sense of superiority. In fact there are no human reactions that may not be the basis for the feeling of superiority. To be an officer in an organization, to possess wealth, beauty, strength, reputation, prestige, or political power, to be a devil with the ladies or a social reformer, a master crook or a missionary, an ascetic or an atheist, a man of cool judgment or of great learning are samples of the stuff that the hunger for superiority feeds on.

The hierarchy of social strata exhibits endless possibilities for the craving for superiority. The

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discharged workman beats his wife, she slaps the children, and they kick the dog which chases the cat as each in turn is both inferior and superior. The vagabond on the street may feel inferior to the tenement dweller and so on up to the social leader who is mortified at having failed to capture the latest social lion. On the other side, even the vagabond may, at least occasionally, enjoy his actual or apparent freedom, with the feeling of superiority, and may feel very superior when he beats up a fellow waif or still better a policeman and gets his name in the paper. Most normal reactions are mixed. Only he who lives entirely in a world of his own construction can feel himself consistently in a position of superiority. Only he who is powerless to affect his real or imagined environment remains consistently in a position of inferiority.

The highest form of behavior involves the conscious striving for purposes and values. Through his effort the individual creates new values within his own system of values as well as within that of his community. This creation of values may be regarded as the major purpose and goal of each personality, perhaps the ultimate purpose and goal of each living organism. In the last analysis all human effort and effect are judged by reference to

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objective (social or absolute) values. While such values enhance the store of self-values (*Selbstwertfülle*, W. Stern) they also benefit the community. Objective values are produced unconsciously even by plants and animals, but the human personality alone is able to create them consciously.

One of our conspicuous human values is social appreciation or prestige. The personality strives not only for accomplishment but also for prestige. It desires to exhibit the values which it creates and to have them recognized as social values. Prestige attained by the total effort of the personality enriches the store of self-values.

The prestige of the personality and the enrichment of its self-values is always important. However, it does not occupy the first place but rather represents in the case of the normal psychically balanced, socially adjusted personality a normal consequence of personal effort and a means to the higher purpose of creating values for the community. One may speak of a normal striving for prestige as an ambition for accomplishment; quite frequently one speaks in this sense of "healthy ambition" for the creation of genuine values and for social approval.

The individual who is ambitious for real ac-

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complishment exists for the world. He lives and works for the environment and is more or less conscious of this fact. For him it is a matter of doing and being, of genuine values and goals. His antithesis is the individual who is ambitious chiefly for prestige, of whom it may be said that he assumes or acts as though the world existed for him. For the individual ambitious for prestige the important question is not that of serving society through his store of self-values, instead he seeks above all to enhance his self-valuation. For him it is a question of prestige and appearance, of pseudovalues and pseudogoals. For him the environment is not a field of effort but a sounding board for his ego-prestige, a stage for his vanity. Whereas in the person who is ambitious for accomplishment everything is true and genuine; in the case of the person who is ambitious for prestige other goals are neither genuine nor true, but rather presented and enacted for the sole benefit of the ego.

It is clear that the person ambitious for accomplishment not only feels himself a part of the whole, but belongs to society, whereas the person who is ambitious for prestige stands in a certain opposition to society. With this in mind one may postulate two dichotomous or contrasting types,

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the environment-type and the ego-type which are related in certain respects to Jung's extraverts and introverts. Obviously, there are some immediate relationships between the environment-type and the feeling of and craving for superiority, and between the ego-type and the craving for the feeling of superiority connected with pseudosuperiority.

The environment-type's striving for accomplishment presupposes a matter-of-fact superiority that enables him to go straight ahead and eventually to succeed in his striving, to reach goals, realizing and increasing his own and the community's genuine values. His "healthy ambition" is identical with his craving for superiority. His feeling of superiority is based on his matter-of-fact superiority and is increased by the successes of his efforts which legitimately, and automatically, increase his prestige.

The ego-type strives for prestige only; he is not interested in effort and genuine values. His particular striving is not in immediate connection with his matter-of-fact superiority and so his feeling of superiority is not based upon it. Even if he has some matter-of-fact superiority he will not attempt to exploit it immediately for accomplishment but would rather like to have some other

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kind of matter-of-fact superiority and lacking this he creates a fiction—the fiction of a pseudo-superiority.

This pseudosuperiority usually conceals some matter-of-fact inferiority which the ego-type worries about and for which he overcompensates by the fiction of pseudosuperiority. He is not satisfied in his desire for prestige, that is, in his craving for the feeling of superiority in utilizing his genuine superiority; so he seeks to satisfy his desire for prestige through the byways of pseudosuperiority. It is easily understandable that on such a weak basis few genuine goals and purposes can be attained, nor are genuine values to be won; instead the ego-type deals with pseudogoals, pseudopurposes, and pseudovalues—emphasizing and enjoying the peel of the orange, not its content. In connection with psychopathic, especially with hysterical, manifestations, we often enough have to deal with the pure desire for prestige (hysterical acting, swindling, fabricating).

We confine ourselves here to this fundamental discussion. We must deal later with its implications. We should like to emphasize that the environment-type and ego-type are merely abstractions as types always are. Individuals never are types, but may approach certain types more or less

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closely—generally presenting features which theoretically belong to different types. That is particularly the case with human personalities and their individual shares of superiority and inferiority, of craving for accomplishment and for prestige.

The distinction between genuine and pseudo-goals is significant for the understanding and evaluation of an individual. Nevertheless, just how a personality is related to the community from the point of view of effort, prestige, valuation, and set goals is not so important; because the community's major interest centers in the question: What on the whole results for the community's system of values from the existence of the given personality? In other words: there are individuals who are unable to adjust themselves to their environment and whom the environment cannot adjust to itself; those individuals go their egotistic way, in their striving for ego-prestige (pseudosuperiority). They may attain certain successes, which at first must be adjudged as pseudovalues. However, even such pseudovalues occasionally can be turned into genuine values by the community for its benefit as has occurred, for example, in the development of certain "healing" cults. Whether later such values again reveal themselves as pseudovalues, as frequently happens, is another ques-

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tion. For all is changing, even the relatively permanent systems of values.

This natural history of mutual adjustment between the ego and the non-ego is only an outline. To follow it systematically would involve a treatise on psychology and psychopathology. We must limit ourselves in this place to those aspects of the general discussion which bear on our immediate problem—the craving for superiority.

THE CRAVING FOR SUPERIORITY

QUITE in contrast to both matter-of-fact superiority and a feeling of superiority but intimately connected with them, is the craving for superiority. We evade any consideration of the craving for a feeling of superiority in so-called inorganic nature because, as already suggested, we do not know anything about it. We can suppose, however, that some animals not only enjoy their matter-of-fact superiority but may even crave it. It is obvious enough that a craving for or feeling of superiority is, under many forms, an outstanding characteristic of human beings; and craving for superiority plays a prominent part in group behavior. We confine ourselves here to the significance of a craving for superiority and possibly inferiority in human beings.

We should like to emphasize again our statement that superiority and inferiority are matters of fact as well as of feeling and craving; we believe that their biological background is rooted deeper than any psychic manifestation. They go back to the fundamental relations of an organism to its environment, to the very nature of stimulus and reaction. As we have seen, the feelings of

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superiority and inferiority may be congruent or incongruent with the facts. The craving for superiority may refer either to matters of fact or to feeling, or to both. It makes a great deal of difference to the individual as well as to society which reference is present or is emphasized.

Outstanding examples of persons with the feeling of superiority are the solitary, the hermit, the daydreamer, the mystic, and the paranoiac. Building up their own world and philosophy of life (*Weltanschauung*) for themselves, each may attain pronounced feelings of superiority. The craving for prestige is usually characteristic of such persons. The ascetic demonstrates that one may derive satisfaction or a feeling of superiority from poverty as well as from abundance.

For the feeling of superiority, and for the craving for superiority, the imagined environment may be, under certain circumstances, more valuable for the individual than the real environment under other circumstances, as it is in daydreamers and actors. The flight from the world plays an important part in the natural history of man's feeling of and craving for superiority.

Since subjective wish-fulfilment is a common human weakness, it not infrequently becomes a short cut to a feeling of superiority, reaching its

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extreme form in delusions of grandeur. Similarly fear may be a short cut to a feeling of inferiority of which the delusion of worthlessness is the climax. However, even delusions of worthlessness tend in the direction of salvation of the self-value (*Selbstwertrettung*) which may be interpreted as the craving for superiority in a special guise. A person who feels worthless may pride himself on his insight and honesty. The sinner confessing his unworthiness does so with the purpose of being absolved—to get back his feeling of superiority in being at peace with God. Pathologically, if a melancholiac accuses himself of mortal sin he not only humiliates himself, but in his self-humiliation he fights for the salvation of his soul, for the salvation of his self-value, and he enjoys in a certain masochistic way his self-humiliation. Often enough, sadistic features are included in such self-accusations in so far as a melancholic patient consciously and intentionally may torture people around him with his lamentations, e.g., a woman may continuously complain to her husband and her children that she has always been a bad housekeeper and has never been happy with them. All this fits into our belief that there exists no genuine craving for inferiority.

The craving for matter-of-fact superiority is a

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wholesome and useful personal characteristic. It may and often does result in significant achievement. The craving for a feeling of superiority, irrespective of the facts, is conspicuous in many psychopaths. Craving for pseudosuperiority is always unfortunate. It is hard for a person with such a craving to square himself with the real world and there often results an absorption in the world of fantasy.

It is important to remember that matter-of-fact superiority is relative. In almost every individual certain capacities or personality characteristics—psychic or physical—develop in a manner and to a degree which make the individual superior to the majority of his fellow men. On the other hand, there is no one individual in whom we fail to find some features, qualities, or properties which are inferior to corresponding features, qualities, or properties in most other individuals. This fact of relativity is often used in psychotherapeutic procedures. It is frequently helpful to point out to a person lacking in self-confidence his genuine superiorities which he must have in one direction or another.

All these various matter-of-fact superiorities and matter-of-fact inferiorities may be felt as pleasant or unpleasant. Superiority will be com-

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monly experienced in a positive way as agreeable or advantageous to the personality, whereas inferiority will be experienced as disagreeable or disadvantageous. In general each person will prefer to be superior and to enjoy the sense of superiority—he will try to overcome, ignore, or avoid the experience or the sense of inferiority. If a person learns to enjoy one experience more than another he will always tend to crave for the more enjoyable experience and to try to escape the less enjoyable.

We are now confronted with the problem of the craving for inferiority. There is no doubt about the existence of matter-of-fact inferiority and the feeling of inferiority. We believe, however, that a real craving for inferiority is nonexistent. If human behavior is examined, persons are found often enough who apparently seek their own humiliation. Certainly many human beings feel at their ease in a personal and social situation which for others would mean bondage or slavery. Do such persons crave inferiority?

Every person tries to make something of his life; this does not mean that he is able to arrive at notable accomplishments, but every person has a fundamental drive to do so. On this basis it is not illogical to assume that the individual may

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make "virtues out of his vices"—to use even his disadvantages for his own benefit; for example, a person who is not able to live an independent life may decide for his own advantage to live a dependent life and may enjoy it. Such circumstances furnish no ground for the belief that there exists a craving for inferiority. One might perhaps contend that there are very pronounced manifestations of inferiority, which personalities of certain types crave. The best example we can think of is masochistic behavior. But even the masochist seeks pleasure; and pleasure will always be connected with the sense of superiority. We do not say that a masochist who devotes himself to his powerful mistress would be a good example of matter-of-fact superiority, but we do not hesitate to claim that in his desire for masochistic submission, and still more, in his immediate masochistic experiences, he may derive the most intense pleasure he is able to attain. In this attainment, as well as in the obvious peculiarity of his attitude—in which he may feel himself extremely different from the majority of his fellow men—we are compelled to assume that he experiences superiority. That may often be a feeling of pseudosuperiority. But we hold that most men would prefer even pseudosuperiority to inferiority. The craving for

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some sort of superiority is so deeply ingrained that many men transfigure matter-of-fact inferiority into pseudosuperiority to satisfy their desire for prestige.

We observe many people busying themselves with trivial things, poor surrogates of real accomplishments, let us say with the duties of the presidency of a small club or society. They enjoy their outstanding position and the prestige they gain. Sometimes they may say to themselves: "This is fine—I am making a fool of myself"; and they do not forget to add: "and this insight of mine and this self-criticism make me really outstanding." This is their way of saving what they may take to be their matter-of-fact superiority.

We should be unable to understand the craving for superiority without including the conception of purpose and value, of goals for which human beings crave. From the standpoint of the individual the purpose for which he strives is always more important than the purpose of another individual. In other words, the individual says: "My own purpose is better than his purpose." That is why he tries to attain it. The personality structure of the individual determines how he will try to adjust his own purposes to those of other individuals and of the group to which he belongs.

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This predilection for one's own purposes, and the comparison of one's own purposes with those of others, necessarily result in some system of values. It seems clear that the system of values which is built up by everyone during his individual development, according to his personality, and according to his group or environment, has its biological basis in the fundamental matter-of-fact superiority and inferiority.

We admit that at first it is a curious paradox to say that a feeling of superiority may be attained through humiliation and humility. But that is found not infrequently in life and in literature. We recall the general discussion of the distribution of human traits, and note the probability that matter-of-fact humility as a trait would also show a normal distribution. While different races and social strata undoubtedly have characteristic distribution of traits, any individual will possess a trait to a higher degree than many others. Awareness of this fact may give rise to true judgments of individual differences. But the sense of superiority in humility is something more than this. It involves a scheme of values in which humility is an admirable trait, and worth exploiting socially. Given such a scheme, pretense, affectation, the

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wish, or any other short cut, may be just as effective in evoking the feeling of superiority from humility as from other traits.

The most humble person is a leader of the humble people. He is superior among them and he enjoys this superiority, and uses it as a tool to best persons who are not humble at all—they may even believe that he is superior. There is nothing so absurd that it will not be believed and fought for. In this fact we may see the reasons why some notorious virtuosos in pseudosuperiority have such great success. As we all know, various religions teach respect for humility and demand it from their followers not only toward God but also in some degree toward their priests and fellow men. Many believe that humility in this world will be recompensed in Heaven. No wonder that humiliation is looked on as a kind of perfection! However, we have yet to discover in it a craving for real inferiority. We assume that there is always some progress in the universe, that there is nothing—no person, no event, no condition—which can ever be repeated; that all is changing, tending in the direction of its striving. With this assumption we are led to the conclusion that this direction must be connected with a craving for superi-

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ority. From this root we may be able to trace the reason for the overpowering rôle played by the matter-of-fact superiority, by the feeling of and by the craving for superiority.

THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH PERSONALITY

TO say that Mr. John Jones is a "unicum" is at once a biological truism, a doubtful social compliment, and a presumption as to his inner experience. If, as seems to be a fact, every individual actually differs in some discernable way from all the others, then obviously each of us is biologically unique. When deviations from the social type become sufficient to evoke notice they are commonly regarded by the group with suspicion. Each for himself, however, is conscious of a great and highly significant gap between his own personality and all others, and is usually not only complacent toward the difference, but regards it with a degree of satisfaction. Each personality is in a class by itself with a supreme position in that class. This is biologically a product of the distribution of genes and of the evolution of the personality; sociologically it finds its expression in a unique combination of capacities for adjustment. If the division of labor were rational each individual would do the work for which he is best fitted. In this way society would most profit from the uniqueness of each individual.

The recognition of his unique position in the

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universe might of itself evoke in the individual a judgment of superiority to some and inferiority to others. As a matter of fact that consciousness is usually much more intimate and emotional than intellectual. The fate of no other person arouses the same poignant emotional response as one's own. This colors one's possessions and all one's reactions with a peculiar emotional emphasis, and gives them a transcendent value. The self and its belongings, its hopes, and accomplishments are the most important things in the world to each personality. No moment of consciousness may be entirely free from this sense of superiority of me and mine to the rest of the universe. The consequent implications are widespread and important.

There is no doubt of this constant emotional bias in human conduct. All reactions are motivated within a self however much this fact may be deplored. One's motives may be primitive or sophisticated, narrowly selfish or colored by sympathy and altruism but they are one's own, never those of any other person unless some "I" has adopted them. All our acts consequently participate in the scheme of values that centers in the self and these acts therefore tend to be regarded as superior to the acts of others. About the most efficient corrective of this attitude is competition

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which tends to reduce the sense of superiority in at least one of the participants. Without it the child is apt to regard his kind of ball tossing as superlatively fine. College students may suffer the same confusion between fact and feeling. They call it class spirit and college spirit. Some scientists even have been known to regard their special line of scientific activities as superlatively important; even if they do not have any accomplishments of their own to offer.

The uniqueness of the narrower self may also be extended to include one's kin, club, social stratum, nation, race. Superiority of the Nordic races is readily admitted by Nordics. My nation right or wrong! Divine right is not an exclusive prerogative of kings. Capitalists, employers, and artists have a similar feeling. The craving for superiority is the main support of moralists, missionaries, and conservatives as well as of reformers and revolutionists. Competition still remains the great corrective.

What holds true of acts is true of the products of one's acts. Few artists or authors are capable of a cold evaluation of their creative efforts. One's own drawings or books, compositions or stories have a halo of glory seldom shared by those of another. There is nothing so close to grand opera

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as a man's own whistle. Nothing so clearly approaches the absolute as the philosophy he writes by himself.

There is also a kind of radiation or transfer of the feeling of superiority from personality to remoter things, from the self to one's possessions. One's home and its decorations, one's books and art gallery may have few aspects of real superiority to others but they have a unique feel. They are one's own.

Street, town, state, and native land; clothes, armchair, and favorite pipe; child, sweetheart, wife, and family; snapshots, mementos, and souvenirs, all participate in this reflected glory. No one ever was so wise as a child thinks his father, no one so beautiful as his mother. Even the voluntary absence of possessions may condition a feeling of superiority. One may glorify poverty, or sublimate it, as St. Francis did, with an undeniable craving for and feeling of superiority. It is great to travel with a dozen wardrobe trunks, but one may also have a feeling of being a much more experienced traveler, having only a suitcase.

Any of these emotional transfers may react on one's own feeling of superiority. The man of wealth often feels himself competent also in religion, education, art, and science. The "unintended

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arrogance of conscious wealth" is not infrequently felt in colleges and charitable institutions, in politics, and even in church organizations. Something analogous occasionally happens to the egos of successful politicians and great inventors and scientists.

Perhaps the most amazing transfers of the feeling of value are those from personality, things, and events to symbols. The very names of the Deity are sacred in all cultures. Signet rings, scepters, and signatures, the cross, the sacrament, and the benediction are things set apart and come to have value in themselves. Epithets, curses, and other maledictions are of the same order in spite of the marked difference in direction.

The snob is another typical instance of self-centered arrogance. But snobbishness is not confined to the college student and the aristocrat. It is also a phenomenon of Main Street and the underworld. He who does not speak the vernacular or dress like the herd is a barbarian. An unkempt Chinaman wagged his head and said of a tourist: "He also may be a human being."

Man's attitude toward the taboo may seem at first to be the result of his feeling of inferiority. However, in every tribe there are people who are allowed to have immediate contact with tabooed

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objects and ritual. These people are superior in the eyes of their tribesmen and they enjoy their superiority. But the rest of the tribe crave superiority in their efforts to identify themselves with their superiors and, through them, with the taboos. We may find a similar attitude regarding the Deity, in so far as the earthly representatives of the Deity are superior to the laity who, on their part, are yearning for identification with the pastors and priests and so with the Deity.

In the foregoing discussion, we emphasized the uniqueness of each individual and the significance of this uniqueness for the feeling of and the craving for superiority. Nevertheless, there appears—as a striking feature—the individual's desire “to belong.” It would be nonsensical for the individual to be entirely isolated in his uniqueness; he can only enjoy being a unicum if he belongs—if his “I” has some relation to a “Thou,” if his microcosm is involved in a macrocosm. Being a unicum, the individual will always be inclined to regard himself as important, but he cannot do this without some approval of the others. He cannot realize what prestige implies, without belonging. Even the most outstanding individuals, artists, scientists, inventors, men of genius—the producers of new values—must have an audience which they

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can address and impress, teach and edify. Nietzsche said, addressing the Sun: "What wouldst Thou be, great star, if Thou didst not have those for whom Thou art shining?"

We are confronted here with the problem of identification which was implied in the foregoing remarks about the personality as a unicum. The individual's desire to belong necessarily leads to various kinds of identification with larger entities: the individual is—to a certain extent—identifying his own purposes with his group's purposes. It may depend on the individual's strength and impressiveness, as well as on the group's readiness and impressionability, whether in the process of identification the individual plays a more active rôle—identifying the group with himself—or a more passive rôle—being identified with the group. It is quite common that the individual, in his desire to belong, not only attempts to identify himself or his ends and purposes with a group, but particularly with another person—with that person he himself would most like to be. This person may be alive or dead, may be an ordinary human being, or a saint, or even God.

Here the ultimate goal of the desire to belong becomes quite apparent under the very process of identification: it is the individual's desire to out-

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grow himself—to be not only a unicum, but to be more than a unicum. Finally that must lead man in the direction of the universe, of the Unknown, of the Divine. The ubiquitous craving for superiority cannot be seen anywhere more clearly, more forcefully, and more mysteriously, than in this human trend, in the approach to the Divine, or in the striving toward the Unknown. Being united with the Ultimate would take away the last bit of inferiority and feeling of inferiority. We are of the opinion that with the biological development of matter-of-fact superiority the insistent drive toward the Unknown necessarily started. Sometimes it seems that the belonging of the individual—his belonging to a group, his attempts at identification, even his whole life—is experienced by him as a sort of bridge thrown from his own little self to the eternity and infinity of the Unknown.

It is scarcely necessary to explain how differently this experience is elaborated by various individuals and on the various levels of development of the human race. But we may note that religion is the field in which this very striving takes place, and add, that it is an extremely characteristic and striking manifestation of human craving for superiority—of man's attempt to find the way from his uniqueness to the highest union.

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Here may be found some evidence of the fact that there exists no real craving for inferiority and that the enjoyment of humiliation and humility—from the religious aspect—may be nothing else than one path among others, all of which lead toward the Unknown; victims and martyrs look forward to entering Paradise as conquerors.

In the process of identification the craving for superiority is implied as well as the feeling of inferiority. It is always a kind of striving away from inferiority which accompanies and reinforces the craving for superiority. That becomes very evident in identification. A vest-pocket edition of Napoleon likes to identify himself with the great emperor. He may say: "I am going to be like Napoleon. However, I am sorry this fellow was still somewhat greater than I am or ever will be."

The phenomena of identification are very common in normal mental life and fairly well understood. They may be related to man's clothes and possessions, to his children and social relations, to purposes and to the universe.

However, the line dividing what is mine from what is me is commonly tentative and uncertain. So also is the line that divides the self from the environment. Physically, mentally, and spiritually

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there are no sharp boundaries that will stand critical analysis. The self and the non-self not only merge into each other; they are in a real sense identical. Our practical judgments create a separation that would be difficult to justify theoretically. For example, a cough or the measles is often regarded as something foreign which I catch and have and throw off. Or again, my social reputation is commonly considered as a part of my personality. Other things are occasionally felt and reacted to as a part of me which cooler judgment regards as a part of the environment—my material possessions, my writings and other artifacts of my personality, my eyeglasses, my child, my social connections, my prestige, and my morals. The last is a nice illustration. Morals really belong to the social group. But they are usually adopted by me and identified as a factor of my personality. Much the same thing happens to my position in an organization. I am chairman of a committee, officer in the navy. I also tend to identify myself with my ideals, my charities, and my university. Rational identification with the universe regularly occurs in solipsism, when the only universe is the self; and with God in idealistic pantheism. A feeling of identification often includes the hero about whom I read, or whom I see on the stage or

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screen. I participate in a very real way in his tribulations, his problems, experiences, and triumphs, his depression and elation. This may result in a modification of behavior and personality with notable educational and mal-educational after-effects.

There is no limit to such possibilities, no known law which they follow. They are among the common short cuts to the delusions of importance and grandeur. But they also represent wholesome mechanisms of development and mental adjustment, of education and reëducation.

THE INSATIABILITY OF THE CRAVING FOR SUPERIORITY

THE craving for superiority apparently belongs to a small group of fundamental traits and a still smaller group of naturally insatiable ones. The dominance and biological foundations of the craving we have already discussed. It may be closely related to the impulse of self-preservation. The survival of the fittest may be nothing else than Nature's stamp of approval on the overpowering importance and effect of matter-of-fact superiority and on the craving for superiority she has created. The insatiability of this craving is not only interesting in itself, but apparently has interesting normal and abnormal consequences.

The fact of insatiability has not yet been established either by a concurrence of documented experience or experiment. There are indeed certain apparent contradictions to such a generalization. Certainly the craving acts like a unit-trait, present in various individuals and at various times in various degrees. In this respect it seems to conform to the known distributions of all measured human traits. On this basis one would expect to and does find persons with very slight craving for superi-

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ority and others in whom it appears in a very high degree, while the majority are somewhere in between. This fact apparently means that in some persons the craving is easily satisfied while in others it is satisfied with greater difficulty. Under such circumstances the concept of insatiability of the craving might seem to be inapplicable.

Difficulties arise in at least one other direction. In certain instances the craving for superiority runs in cycles of dominance. It is not invariant, but depends on the laws of relative fatigue, on competition and rivalry, on refractory phase, and probably also on environmental conditions. Any concept of insatiability must take these facts into account.

Apparently then the craving for superiority has no natural limits of satiation, whereas other cravings regularly reach a natural climax. The craving for food reaches a climax in the feeling of repletion; the cravings for change, for exercise, for playing games, for sex relations, for solitude, for invention, and for some drugs, all seem to have analogous natural barriers to persistency or further development in each of the several episodes in which they appear.

We cannot find a similar natural barrier in the case of the craving for superiority. In this it seems

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to resemble the craving to live with which it may be closely related. Even in the upper limits of the distribution of actual superiority in any trait a person may not be satiated. Great financiers, great scientists like great generals may sigh for more worlds to conquer. We may refer to our discussions concerning the craving for identification with the Unknown and exemplify our point by recalling the mystic who is obviously insatiable in his craving for superiority, seeking persistent identification with Christ or God in the *unio mystica*. It is interesting that the mystic usually is unable to describe the more profound mystical experiences; and that he thus emphasizes the uniqueness and superiority of his experiences and of himself.

At the risk of being accused of mysticism ourselves we must point out that the insatiability of the craving for superiority is intimately related not only to magic but also to some of man's highest aspirations. Every man would like to lengthen his life indefinitely and ardently desires some kind of immortality. All speculation concerning the Absolute in philosophical as well as religious systems tends in this direction. Real insatiability implies craving for something which is unattainable; possibly there is in the persistent life impulse

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of each individual, with its craving for immortality, an example of this insatiability. To attain the ideal would mean that there was nothing further to strive for. Absolute superiority of this kind would be identical with death. Instead of that mankind seeks its perfection in identification with infinite purposes. Infinite time and space seem overwhelmingly superior. We escape through that mysterious integration of time and space with the ubiquitous and apparently never ceasing progress toward purposes which makes up our spiritual life. The supreme manifestation of this escape is identification with the life of a Spirit of the Universe.

THE CRAVING FOR THE FEELING OF SUPERIORITY

CRAVING for the feeling of superiority seems to have a different distribution and to run a different course from the craving for superiority. Either may be strong while the other is weak. In fact they behave like different traits, though the positive correlation between them is often marked.

Those cases in which the craving for a feeling of superiority is high while the craving for superiority is relatively low are especially interesting from a psychopathological standpoint. But many normal individuals show a grave discrepancy. Such individuals find many short cuts to the desired goals such as: (1) Vicarious identification with prominent persons or heroes. The scene may be grand opera, a prize fight, a football field, a novel, or any one of many situations. (2) Susceptibility to flattery and sycophantic applause. The scene may be any social gathering like a tea or a Sunday school picnic, or the more intimate relations of courtship and marriage. (3) Arbitrary exclusion of criticism by emotional outburst or withdrawal from a critical environment. (4) Exhibitionism of various orders from club oratory to

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scientific productivity, from crude displays of sex characteristics and the use of perfumery and cosmetics to elaborate dress, from scratching one's initials in prominent places to poetry, the pictorial and the theatrical arts, from criminal notoriety to service on prominent committees and seeking to have one's picture in the society column. (5) More or less systematized delusions of grandeur.

Obviously the craving for a feeling of superiority is immediately related to the desire for prestige and to pseudosuperiority. But that depends on whether the craving arises from the present matter-of-fact superiority or not.

It is a great desideratum that the feelings of superiority, and inferiority, should agree with the facts. They often tend, however, to run a totally different and independent course and these may be quite uncorrelated in psychopathic and psychotic personalities. An extreme case of negative correlation might be illustrated by a person in the last stages of dementia paralytica, when the patient may report that he never felt better, that he could run a mile in record time, or do Herculean tasks, while as a matter of fact he cannot lift his head from his pillow. Less extreme cases are found in great variety not only in illness and at various stages of convalescence, but also in health.

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Patients rarely feel their real weakness while lying in bed. Our normal feelings of fitness or capacity seldom precisely match the facts.

There are possibilities here for psychotherapeutic procedure. It may be useful for psychopaths to learn about the limitation of their capacities as well as about their matter-of-fact superiority which is never entirely lacking. Eventually such insight may enable one or another to build up a sound basis to work on instead of spoiling his life with tasks beyond his powers. Sometimes, it is true we have to deal in these cases with social arrogance and prejudice—but good will may help to conquer even them. Nevertheless, we do not intend to overestimate the influence of such therapies and we realize that the individual's attitude toward superiority and inferiority is rather deeply founded in his *Anlagen* (psychobiological predisposition).

Extreme exaggerations of the feeling of superiority and of pseudosuperiority are found in the natural history of the "Conceited Ass." The C. A. constantly affects superiority to his environment. That is the expression of his *conceit*. Since he is an *ass* the affectation of superiority has no parallel in matters of fact. More or less close approximations to the type are frequently found in a world-wide

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habitat of culture and near culture, for which the C. A. naturally affects bored contempt.

Single specimens show a wide variety of accidental marking, counterchameleon like. Instead of adapting themselves to an environment they counteradapt, conspicuously refusing to adjust to social conventions and as far as their limited power reaches, striving to annihilate the values to which they will not adjust. Instead of building up a new world of fantasy in which they play a dominant rôle, the imagination of the C. A. takes the opposite expedient for maintaining ego-dominance, by degrading the circumstances that threaten his sense of superiority. This subjection or annihilation may have a sort of sadistic flair commonly proceeding much further in fancy than in fact.

We all know individual representatives of the type. They range from those who whistle the arias or tell the plot at the opera, to the *blasé* "student" whom every lecture bores, for whom every library book presents an opportunity for penciled derisive comments, by whom every achievement of others might have been excelled if it had been worth his effort. Some of them indulgently admit that the "old man" has his points but they are usually iconoclasts in morals and reli-

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gion even though they condescendingly approve the spirit of social convention for common men and pat God on the back in token of equality.

Whole nations sometimes seem to acquire the affectations of the C. A., but it is the peculiar mark of infantilism in new civilizations, in youth movements, in pseudo science, and in various "reforms" to rise superior to the accumulated experience of the race.

Some of the most pathetic instances are given when a smattering of a new culture contaminates or dilutes the traditional *mores*; as when the "sophisticated" children of immigrants make sport of the morals, speech, and manners of the *milieu* which gave them birth and opportunity for development; or when a supposedly new form of civilization or art is brutally contemptuous of the forms it considers outgrown and *passé*.

Youth returning from boarding school, finishing school, or sophomoric enlightenment at college easily falls into the mannerisms of the type. Happy the experience of bank, business house, or college which is not informed by some enthusiastic bounder or underdone graduate with credits in special training courses exactly what is the matter with them.

The C. A. knows just how each crisis in eco-

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conomic and political affairs should be remedied, just what panacea would cure the ills of our civilization. Sometimes he sits on a cracker box by the fire of a crossroads store, where he is relatively harmless. Sometimes he is a millionaire, publicist, professor, prime minister, or dictator, when he may do more damage than a whole generation of wisdom can repair. Always he is a misfortune in the community as long as he remains an ass and is conceited.

The C. A. is, of course, only a type representing an extreme craving for the feeling of superiority and attaining a maximum of pseudosuperiority. Even at that, we wonder whether the C. A. may not possess more matter-of-fact superiority than those of his followers who believe in his alleged capacities and accomplishments. Unfortunately there is something of the C. A. in almost every personality. Let him who is without conceit cast stones.

VARIABILITY AND CHANGE

WE have said that there is nothing—no person, no event, no condition—which will ever be repeated. All is changing and it is beyond question that each individual—even the most simple—is changing in every moment of his life. So we ask: How far does this change include changes in superiority and inferiority and in the individual's attitude toward them?

The individual's development which may briefly be characterized by the periods of evolution, production, involution and regression necessarily implies changes in the matter-of-fact superiority and inferiority; e.g., the evolutionary speed and capacity in childhood and adolescence is a matter-of-fact superiority which is lacking in later periods, whereas the capacity for production, the increased store of experiences, may represent matter-of-fact superiority in the productive period. Probably important differences between the sexes are found in all these periods. We mention only the matter-of-fact superiority which is given in woman's share in reproduction and the rearing of children as a counterblast to the doctrine that the female is fundamentally inferior to the male.

We may immediately see the effect of the vari-

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ous kinds of matter-of-fact superiority—and the corresponding kinds of inferiority—in all evolutionary periods, on the *feeling* of and *craving* for superiority. This includes the individual's evaluation of his own and others' superiority and inferiority. These differences and changes are rooted in biological conditions on the basis of which the psychological reactions and experiences (including evaluation) take place. It is beyond question that the individual evolutionary deviations and retardations—normal as well as pathological—will more or less intensively influence the changing superiority and inferiority and so complicate their variability.

However, this variability is not confined to the evolutionary periods and their occasional deviations. It is almost consistently active in each individual as if superiority and inferiority were nothing more than two aspects of the same situation. Even individuals possessing outstanding genuine superiority, experience again and again the sobering realization that their superiority is not perfect but rather combined with some inferiority. Conversely, even extremely inferior persons may become aware of a certain degree of superiority and may often enough enjoy that—to say nothing of

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pseudosuperiority which frequently may appear as a comfort to the weak.

The dominant feeling of superiority or of inferiority differs notably in degree from time to time according to the mood of the individual. One may even disappear, and give place to the other under identical matters of fact. Changing conditions have rapid and profound consequences. We may feel superior to our dentist on the golf course, or in philosophy; not so in his waiting-room and in his operating chair. Analogous changes may be evoked by changes in the direction of regard. We may feel superior when we notice the less fortunate and inferior in comparison with the more gifted members of the same society.

The feelings may also change in longer rhythms, due to some organic conditions about which we know very little. Some of these changes probably have a glandular basis and may express slow shifts in the imperfect balance of inner secretions. Others may be based on a metabolic unbalance in the system of self-regulation with pendulum-like excursions of varying amplitude on either side of a theoretical point of equilibrium.

Still other shifts may be due to better known neuropsychological tendencies. One thinks of the

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influence of relative fatigue in competing neural systems within the individual, of occasional reinforcement and inhibition from apparently unrelated experience, of narcotic drugs, and the influence of fatigue products.

The possible influence of relative fatigue in competing systems may explain those instances in which an individual confronted too long by apparently insolvable personal problems, or overwhelming circumstances, escapes for a time into a simpler artificial world of fiction, art, or fantasy; goes to the movies, plays a game of solitaire, or daydreams. Possibly there is a kind of competition within the neural system corresponding to the dichotomy of feeling of inferiority and superiority. If so, the prolonged exercise of one factor may tend to release the other, constituting the neurological basis of the familiar picture of compensation and overcompensation. Various common phenomena of the inner life look like something of this sort. One learns to expect so-called emotional reactions. Conceit and self-satisfaction are said to forerun a fall. Undue euphoria often seems to presage a period of depression. Normal depressions may eventuate in periods of exaltation, like conversion. Not every condition of depression is followed by factual elation of mood.

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However, merely getting rid of sadness may make the individual feel elated or somewhat euphoric. Physical bases of melancholy and manic phases of the manic-depressive psychoses may be related to various biological tensions which, also, normally, play their rôle in cheerful and gloomy mood. One may observe the development of feelings of superiority and inferiority through the mood which arises from those tensions.

No doubt, superiority and inferiority—including the feeling of and the striving for them—are closely related to the experiences of sex life, as is illustrated by the old Latin sentence: *post coitum animal triste*. In his craving for sexual activity and enjoyment, the individual—especially the male—may be and feel superior and he may experience a peculiar sense of his superiority on the sexual acme followed by the feeling of inferiority and—according to traditional opinions concerning sexuality—even by a feeling of sin and guilt.

Feelings of sin and guilt, furthermore, play an outstanding rôle in religious experience which in turn may give place to elation and with it to the feeling of superiority. We may refer to certain experiences in conversion, particularly in revivals, in primitive rituals, and in the rites of some religious sects. Humiliation, fasting, self-accusation,

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self-torture often precede revival or conversion and are replaced by the elating experience of being redeemed. The experiences and practices of asceticism and mysticism are outstanding illustrations of shifts from feelings of inferiority to feelings of superiority. The part played by sexual life in ascetics and mystics—with its humiliating and elating effects—is worth while considering in this connection: avoiding and repressing the sins of the flesh many of the ascetics and mystics experience oneness with Christ or the Blessed Virgin in their dreams and trances, some of which are unmistakably sexually tainted.

The use of drugs was and is a common device in mystic experiences of the primitive. Moreover, the recourse to drugs as an escape mechanism is prevalent in all civilizations and all cultures. Alcoholic euphoria is a typical instance of escape from reality. The sad part of such use of drugs is that after the euphoria ceases, the consciousness of the intolerable situation returns in full force with a depressed ability to meet it.

The escape may be largely psychological into an unreal world of fantasy or delusion. This may be temporary or fixed as it is in psychopathological systems of which a familiar example is para-

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noia with its delusions of persecution and grandeur. Delusions of grandeur are usually otherwise useless assumptions for the sake of maintaining one's feeling of superiority. Delusions of persecution are not an outgrowth of a craving for inferiority, often not even of a feeling of inferiority. The person who believes himself to be persecuted must somehow have the conviction that there are people who find it worth while to persecute him; that is, to that extent he considers himself to be in some way important. This is not far from the delusion of grandeur with which it is so often associated.

A common form of escape from a feeling of inferiority is to transfer one's weakness to the social environment. This may and frequently does emphasize situations in which the personality can dominate by hysterical outbursts and tantrums of weeping or passion, by invalidism with the consequent comforting care and solicitude of nurse, doctor, or members of the family. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the success of some psychotherapeutic methods is the attendant exaggerated importance attaching to otherwise trivial or depressing episodes of one's personal experience, reinforced by the sympathy and solicitude of a dis-

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tinguished practitioner or even of a group of doctors. Out of such materials satisfying worlds may be built up. At least, they satisfy for a time.

However, such feelings of superiority which rest on a basis of false values are particularly unstable and subject to variation as are all feelings of pseudosuperiority. Without a stable system of purposes and values the personality cannot achieve either harmony within itself or stability in matter-of-fact superiority. In discordant personalities which are characterized by confusion and rivalry between false values and genuine values, stable feelings are scarcely thinkable.

The whole subject of variability of the feelings suffers from lack of reliable data, both descriptive and experimental. We do not know either the frequency or the intensity of normal changes. It would be a real contribution to the development of a sound basis for an interpretation and understanding of psychopathic personalities if mature persons with sound psychological training would give us full and frank accounts of their mood variations. Within a frame of this sort changes between the feelings of superiority and inferiority would probably find a prominent place.

TIME

EVIDENTLY man is able to master—that is, to be superior to—space, to a certain extent. That is implied in our foregoing discussion of identification with the universe. In the present chapter we shall give special consideration to time.

Martin Heidegger made fundamental contributions to the theory of time, and some philosophers and psychiatrists are following in the ways he has shown. Obviously, time is one of the greatest problems we have to deal with and we may give it only superficial consideration. It may be that, as Heidegger suggests, time includes the last sense or meaning of existence. As has been frequently pointed out there is no existence except in time. Time is always changing. It is as if one were watching the flow of a river which endlessly goes by and endlessly continues. Time never ceases to move with its characteristic flux; but despite this the very structure of time apparently does not undergo any change.

We are living in time; we often say we have time. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say time has us, because our having time is extremely limited. Our short span of life appears still more limited in comparison with the eternal flux.

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The adjustment to time is always an extremely difficult, even insolvable, task which mankind has to carry on. So man has tried to subdue time in part by dividing it, differentiating past, present, and future. This apparent, but purely subjective, division of time clearly demonstrates man's helplessness.

That is very significant for our topic—the craving for superiority. For, it is evidently very difficult or impossible for man to “conquer” time, to be superior to it. A good deal of matter-of-fact inferiority, and some craving for superiority, may be based in living beings' inability to be really superior to time. We may find in this very inability, in this particular matter-of-fact inferiority—common to all beings—the root of the human compensatory concept of immortality. Being immortal would mean nothing else than being superior to the ever going time—to eternity. It is thus perfectly understandable that human beings were compelled to equip their divine superiors with the quality of immortality.

We have alluded to immortality and the craving for immortality in another connection. It seems desirable to consider it here a little further. It is a matter-of-fact superiority that younger persons have more time, “more future” than older

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people. Conversely, the larger span of time which older persons have lived, the "larger past" of older persons, may give them a certain matter-of-fact superiority in the shape of experience. This fundamental difference regarding time is the root of necessarily endless misunderstandings and struggles between the generations representing their craving for superiority. Youth says, "Let us take the helm; this is our time." Old Age replies, "We are still in command, our time has not yet gone." "To go with the time" is an ideal which no human being completely attains. Youth's weapon is the future, old age's weapon is the past.

We experience "in time" and we experience "time" in various ways. Some people are able to use their time effectively, to fill it; others suffer from *ennui*, let it go by and do not know what to do with it. There is to be observed a kind of different "velocity" in experiencing or even in living; one person may live quickly, another slowly. Time objectively by the clock is the same for all of us, but our dealing with it is extremely different. There are fatalists and optimists and pessimists whose attitudes toward time—and "in time"—are quite characteristic. In all these attitudes we find the inevitable human inferiority to time. However, we also find in all of them some

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kind of craving for superiority over time. The fatalist may say, "It doesn't matter, time is coming and going"; he may try to satisfy his craving for superiority in respect to time with insight and resignation, "It will be all the same in a thousand years." Similarly, the pessimist. The optimist, on the contrary, always finds life wonderful. He, too, tries to conquer time by having a fine time; that means by filling and enjoying each moment at its very best.

Cautious and provident persons try to secure their own and their families' future; such providence is another attempt to master time. The "man who knows all in advance" is a caricature which may be merely mentioned in passing. Shamans, seers, and prophets are special types of persons who claim to have some capacity of seeing and providing for the future, that is, of being "superior to time," in a certain degree. There is much struggling for time and against time in all human endeavor dealing with it, that is, with the unknown future. Think of the rôle the promise of Paradise or of life after death played in the history of mankind. This promise implies the idea that the individual will become superior to time. All human attempts to lengthen life have their origin in the desire and hope to conquer time as well and

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as far as possible. There are striking accounts of such attempts in science and in *belles-lettres*.

There are people who apparently have no respect for or real appreciation of time at all. Busy-ing themselves and others they really misuse time. They "always have time" which may be the same as to have "no time at all." We have to deal here with some sort of pseudosuperiority or feeling of pseudosuperiority in respect to time which is founded on matter-of-fact inferiority concerning it. One might conjecture that such persons are not satisfied with their own lives, with their own span of time, and therefore try to swallow other people's time as if they would thus be able to increase the sum total of their time allowance.

These "busificators" sometimes live by elaborate time schedules which they like to enforce on their surroundings—that is another manner of "mastering" time, which really is a pseudomastering, for those very individuals often call themselves "slaves" of their time. From them we may easily find transitions to the psychopathic anancasts who are involved in various compulsory ideas and actions, and are always hesitating to take the necessary step from the past to the future as though they were attempting to hold fast and so to lengthen the present. They are afraid of los-

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ing the past and they are afraid of all that the future may bring to them. It is beyond doubt that anxiety is deeply connected with time or with the experience of time. Anxiety always means insecurity concerning the future—a feeling which scarcely can be perfectly eliminated by any result of the “quest for certainty” (Dewey).

In psychopathology we often have to deal with some peculiar phenomena related to time, some of which are named disturbances of the sense of time. Certain manic depressive and other psychotics may experience time quite differently from healthy persons.

Most fascinating is the change of attitude toward time or experience of time in some schizophrenics. We have good reasons to assume that schizophrenics can lose the “sense of time” almost entirely, as if living without time or beyond time, giving the impression that they live in another world, in an existence which must be and obviously is fundamentally different from that of normal men. The peculiar behavior and experience of such patients who have lost one basis of existence indicates the enormous significance of time for human behavior.

Though at last time is superior to all human beings we may not overlook the fact that mankind

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has made certain progress in exploiting it. Wise men conserve their time. With the development of railroads, steamers, automobiles, and airplanes man has greatly increased the probability of his reaching a given place at a given time. He has more time at his disposal. Although we may try to arrange the point of time when an event shall take place, we shall never master time.

It must be admitted that time eventually overrules all human matter-of-fact superiority. Death grasps all of us—on time and in time. Man's attitude toward death, however, often enough is a triumphant gesture toward time. If we do not fear death we may have reached the highest degree of relative superiority over time which is attainable for human beings. This is one of the great services of the religious hypothesis. In the heroic attitude of Danton or Louis XVI on the guillotine, of St. Joan and Savonarola at the stake, of millions of unknown soldiers on the battlefields, of millions of common men on their deathbeds, we may seek and find this triumph over death and time which is alluded to in the words: "Those who fall as victims, will as victors rise." Such feeling of superiority over man's greatest enemy is his supreme triumph.

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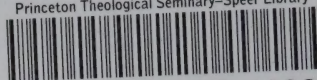
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